

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

Property Name: Essex Elementary School Buildings Inventory Number: BA-1749
Address: 600-2 & 604-6 Dorsey Avenue Historic district: yes ☒ no
City: Essex Zip Code: _____ County: Baltimore County
USGS Quadrangle(s): Middle River
Property Owner: _____ Tax Account ID Number: _____
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): _____ Tax Map Number: _____
Project: _____ Agency: _____
Agency Prepared By: R. Bauer
Preparer's Name: _____ Date Prepared: 5/13/1980
Documentation is presented in: federal files
Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: ☒ Eligibility recommended ☐ Eligibility not recommended
Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G
Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:
Name of the District/Property: _____
Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: yes Listed: yes
Site visit by MHT Staff yes ☒ no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

Based on the limited amount of information that has been supplied, the Essex Elementary School Buildings have not been shown to possess sufficient local historic significance to meet the National Register Criteria at this time. Although they may be two of the oldest buildings in the community of Essex, no association with significant events has been established beyond the very limited role of the buildings as the town's elementary school for about a 10-year period between 1916 and 1925. In addition, no evidence has thus far been presented that these frame, 4-room school buildings of the early 20th c. are distinctive examples, particularly at the local level, of a type or period of construction.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ☐ Eligibility not recommended ☒
Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

MHT Comments: (Federal DOE--the property was recommended eligible by SHPO but determined not eligible by keeper of National Register.)

SHPO

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

Date

B. MacDougall, for Keeper NR

Thursday, April 02, 1981

Reviewer, National Register Program

Date

Thursday, May 27, 2004

Printed from MHT GIS/Library Database

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

MHT-HSI: entered 7/15/79

LPC(PL): hearing 9/18/79

submitted to 10/16/79

0317493702

1 NAME

HISTORIC ESSEX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS

AND/OR COMMON

Essex-Dorsey Senior Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 600 to 602 and 604 to 606 Dorsey Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Essex

VICINITY OF

2nd

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th

Councilmanic District

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☒ OTHER SOCIAL

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Baltimore County
Office of Central Services

Telephone #: 494-3857

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21204

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Courts Building

Liber #: EHK JR. 5969

Folio #: 403

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

BALTIMORE COUNTY HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY
"Essex Elementary School"
Maryland Historical Trust Inventory

MHT No. BA 1749

DATE

On-going since 1964

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSMARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
21 State Circle

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The two Essex Elementary School structures are one-story, rectangular, frame buildings with brown wood-shingle covering and gable roofing. The structures stand on brick foundations. Entrance is by way of projecting vestibules or pavilions, which are also gable-roofed. Double doors with multi-paned windows provide access. The classrooms are lighted on the long dimension of the buildings by clusters of sash windows, five sashes per cluster, with 6-over-6 window arrangement. Louvered wooden vents are provided in the gable ends of each building at attic level. There are crawl basements and heating is provided by hot air systems.

Each school has a pair of brick, outside end-chimneys, and the easternmost structure has corbelled caps on its chimneys.

Architectural style is functional, but the multiple windows suggest colonial revival details of the period. In places, the shingles have been lost, and repairs have been made with composition clapboard materials. In other spots, lost shingles reveal an under layer of narrow wooden siding. The proponents of restoration note that the five wooden steps leading to the vestibules make access difficult for a clientele of older persons. A number of graffiti statements adorn the rear facades, and one slogan is painted on the surface of the rear roof itself.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1916, 1920

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The property and buildings on the sites of 600-606 Dorsey Avenue has served the Essex Community for 63 years. It was the site of the first Essex Elementary School. The first clapboard, frame building to serve as the school was built in 1916. It and three portables housed 111 students. The portables were heated by coal stoves at the back of the room and had a water supply consisting of a metal bucket and dipper. There was no indoor plumbing. In 1920, an additional building was erected next to the original. These two main buildings consisted of two rooms on each side of a hallway.

Due to an increasing school population, the present Essex Elementary School was to be built to handle the burden in 1925. However, the two original buildings and grounds continued to serve Essex residents. The Essex Health Center maintained its offices there for 25 years. In September 1961, the Essex Community College began a full-time program on this site. The main buildings were used as a library and classrooms. Additional temporary buildings were erected. In 1967, the college moved from its Dorsey site to the present campus on Rossville Boulevard. After that, Essex Elementary School returned to its original home for use as an annex and kindergarten. The buildings now house the Essex-Dorsey Senior Center. The surrounding grounds have also been used as the first playing field for the original girls' softball team in 1956 and in more recent years has been the site of an air-sampling station for the area.

This site in Essex has certainly a local, historical value and Essex citizens have urged that the outer facade be maintained in its original condition and that it be considered a Baltimore County Historic Landmark.

There are a variety of opinions about the future of the buildings, as reported in the community newspaper:

The senior center now has use of only half of the western building, but the agency has promised it access to the other half. Turning away prospective Essex seniors, reportedly by the dozens, the group is convinced it could actually fill both structures.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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The county agency seems to be favoring that option, but is awaiting suggestions from an architect before presenting specific ideas for remodeling.

However, the design proposed by the county may turn out not to be exactly what preservationists like Mrs. Ward have in mind. She has stated she considers the Dorsey Avenue facade the aspect most worthy of preservation.

"I think we should keep the outside of the front as it is and renovate the inside," she said. She commented the frame units could even be expanded if the additions are made in the rear.

Mrs. Ward has obtained support of her view from a countywide group for the elderly, the Baltimore County Association of Senior Citizen Organizations (BACSCO). The 80-ish resident said she will ask the local Heritage Society for its endorsement at tonight's meeting.

"There are so many people in Essex who've had an association with those buildings. I feel certain that they support me 100 percent in making them a landmark."

Yet, another member, of the center's Building Committee emphasizes that renovation of the structures should be planned from a basically practical viewpoint. The division of local opinion, Aging office officials said, makes more difficult a decision on exactly what should be done.

Victor J. Basta, the Building Committee member, thinks the two halves of the site should be bridged by a new main entrance. The separate entrances to each would be eliminated.

This enclosure would make use of the entire site as a senior center more convenient, especially in bad weather, he points out....

Because local spokesmen are split in their opinions, Office on Aging officials say they are in a precarious position. Greg Mitchell, in charge of facilities for the agency, said he thinks the concept of keeping the buildings separate has historical merit, but a protected walkway between them would be an improvement.

"So many of the seniors who attend the center attended the grade school as children. I can certainly understand the historical value it must provide for them," he commented.

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However, the facilities coordinator for the same bureau, Michael Brandt, said the feasibility of two separate buildings was questionable. "We are exploring all the alternatives, however," he said, "and it is impossible to say which way it will go." (1)

Greg Mitchell of the Department of Aging informed the Landmarks Preservation staff that his agency has a plan developed by Richard P. Brown Associates, to renovate the buildings; they also have a grant from the Department of Energy for a passive energy installation. (2)

Notes:

1. "Preservation Sought for Dorsey Buildings," Essex Times, December 7, 1978.
2. Greg Mitchell, Baltimore County Department of Aging, to author, July 1979.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Preservation Sought for Dorsey Buildings," ESSEX TIMES, December 7, 1978.

Lynn B. Guttenger, "Landmark Status Proposed for Two Essex Buildings," ESSEX TIMES, July 5, 1979.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.38 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at SE corner of Woodward Drive and Dorsey Avenue, running N21° 10-1/2'W on Woodward, 300 feet; thence N68° 49-1/2'E 200 feet; thence S21° 10-1/2'E 300 feet to Dorsey Avenue; thence S68° 49-1/2'W 200 feet on Dorsey Avenue. The school occupies Lots 1 through 4 on Dorsey Avenue, Plat Book LMCLM 9, f. 74, 75, Revised Plat of Taylor Land Company.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE None

COUNTY None

STATE

None

COUNTY

None

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

From text furnished by M. Linda Martinak

John W. McGrain, Jr.

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore County Office of Planning and Zoning

DATE

August 24, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue, Room 406

TELEPHONE

494-3495

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438